REMARKS

These remarks are in response to the Final Office Action mailed from the Patent Office on September 17, 2008 (Office Action), and the Advisory Action mailed November 26, 2008 (Advisory Action). As this reply is timely filed, no fee is believed due. Claims 1-3, 5-16, 18-20, and 22 remain pending.

Acknowledgement of Telephonic Interview with Examiner

The Applicant would like to thank Examiner Moran for participating in the telephonic interview conducted on December 15, 2008. During that interview, U.S. Patent No. 6,981,153 to Pang et al. (Pang) and U.S. Patent No. 6,496,971 to Lesea et al. (Lesea) were discussed with reference to claim 1. The substance of the interview is largely set forth below. During the interview, an agreement was reached to withdraw the finality of the Office Action responsive to this submission.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejections

Claims 1-3, 5-16, 18-20, and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pang in view of Lesea.

Claim 1 recites "wherein the system further comprises hardware that selectively enables access to the key storage register by allowing the microcontroller access when a program counter of the microcontroller specifies an address within an address range corresponding to the software decryptor within the memory." The Advisory Action contends that Pang teaches this feature at column 20, lines 27-53 and that Lesea teaches this feature at column 6, lines 40-53. Neither passage, however, appears to disclose hardware that would condition access of a microcontroller to a key storage register based upon the value of the program counter of the microcontroller. Both passages are directed to reading configuration memory of a programmable logic device and do not discuss a program counter.

Claim 1 recites that additional hardware is present in the system that checks the value of the program counter independently of the microcontroller. This additional hardware performing an independent check of the value stored in the program counter addresses situations in which malicious code may be introduced into memory used by

the microcontroller. In that case, were such malicious code to be introduced within an address range different from that of the decryptor, any attempt to access the key storage register by the microcontroller when executing the malicious code would be prevented. The additional hardware would read the program counter and determine that the value of the program counter, corresponding to an instruction of the malicious code, is not an address that exists within the address range corresponding to the software decryptor. The additional hardware would prevent the microcontroller from accessing the key storage register. *See* paragraph 19 and FIG. 4 of Applicants' originally filed disclosure. Neither Pang nor Lesea disclose this capability.

Independent claims 9, 12, 18, and 20 include one or more features similar to those discussed within these remarks and are believed to be allowable for the same or similar reasoning. The remaining claims are believed to be allowable by virtue of their own merits and their dependence upon the underlying independent claims.

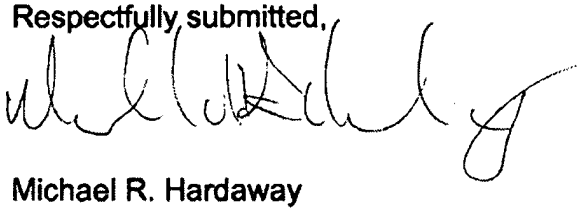
Accordingly, withdrawal of 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 1-3, 5-16, 18-20, and 22 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

All claims are now in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

If there are any questions, the Applicants' attorney can be reached at Tel: 408-879-6149.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael R. Hardaway
Attorney for Applicant
Reg. No. 52,992

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being filed via EFS-Web with the United States Patent and Trademark Office on December 17, 2008.

Susan Wiens

Susan Wiens